

with this Response and Amendment. Attachment A is a marked-up copy of the claim amendments, while Attachment B is a clean copy of the amended claims.

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1, 3-7 and 9-14 are pending in the application. Claim 1 is an independent claim drawn to an apparatus for producing asphalt pellets with claims 3-6 depending therefrom, while claim 7 is an independent claim drawn to a method for producing asphalt pellets with claims 9-14 depending therefrom. Applicants submit that the amendments to the claims do not add new matter within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §132 since the Applicants have changed from "asphalt" to "asphaltenes" as was originally claimed in this application.

Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-14 stand rejected as being based on a non-enabling specification for the use of the term "asphalt."

1. Rejection of Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-14 Under

35 U.S.C. §112, First Paragraph

Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph as being based on a non-enabling specification for

the reasons set forth in the Office Action.

RESPONSE

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to the claims accompanying this response render this rejection moot. In particular, Applicants have amended the claims to remove the term "asphalt" and replace it with the term "asphaltene," which was originally claimed and is supported by the specification. The amendments to the claims remove the basis for this rejection.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 3-7 and 9-14 are now based on an enabling specification. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection thereof as being based on a non-enabling specification.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner indicates that the claims would be allowable if the term "asphalt" was changed to "asphaltene." Applicants thank the Examiner for this indication and have duly complied with the Examiner's suggestion, thus placing the claims in condition for allowance.

Attorney Dkt. No. 15155
Serial No. 09/627,166
Filed: July 27, 2000

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the all pending rejections, and to allow all of the claims pending in this application.

If the Examiner has any questions or comments regarding this matter, he is welcomed to contact the undersigned attorney at the below-listed number and address.

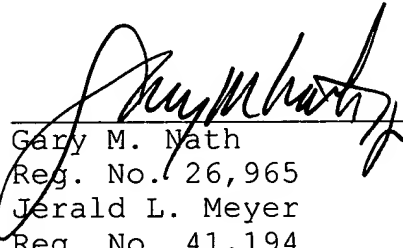
Respectfully submitted,

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Date: May 20, 2002

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Serial No.: 09/627,166

Filed: July 27, 2000

For:

**METHOD OF AND APPARATUS FOR PRODUCING PELLETS FORM
HEAVY HYDROCARBON LIQUID**



Group Art Unit: 1732

Examiner: M. Theisen

ATTACHMENT A - MARKED-UP COPY OF CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Please amend claims 1, 7, 9, 10, 13 and 14 as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) Apparatus for producing [asphalt]
asphaltene pellets comprising:

a) flow means that supplies hot [asphalt] asphaltene
through a conduit to its outlet;

b) pellet producing means that breaks up the liquid
stream of said hot [asphalt] asphaltene exiting the outlet of
said conduit and produces pellets of [asphalt] asphaltene;

c) a reservoir or container that collects said pellets
of [asphalt] asphaltene together with some fluid producing a
slurry; and

d) transporting means that transports said slurry to
the required location.

7. (Twice Amended) A method for producing [asphalt]
asphaltene pellets comprising the steps of:

a) supplying hot [asphalt] asphaltene through a conduit
to its outlet;

b) breaking up the liquid stream of said hot [asphalt]
asphaltene exiting the outlet of said conduit using a pellet
producing medium to produce pellets of [asphalt] asphaltene;

c) collecting said pellets of [asphalt] asphaltene in a
reservoir together with some fluid producing a slurry; and

d) transporting said slurry to a required location.

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9. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 7 wherein the step of collecting said pellets of [asphalt] asphaltene in a reservoir together with some fluid producing a slurry is carried out by collecting said pellets of [asphalt] asphaltene in a reservoir together with some liquid water producing a heavy hydrocarbon or [asphalt] asphaltene-water slurry.

10. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 7 wherein said step of breaking up the liquid stream of hot [asphalt] asphaltene flowing out of the outlet of said conduit using a pellet producing medium so that pellets of [asphalt] asphaltene are produced is carried out by spraying a fluid so that the fluid contacts the [asphalt] asphaltene exiting said outlet of the conduit and pellets of [asphalt] asphaltene are produced.

13. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 10 wherein the step of spraying a fluid so that the fluid contacts the [asphalt] asphaltene exiting said outlet of the conduit and pellets of [asphalt] asphaltene are produced is carried out by spraying liquid water.

14. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 7 including grinding said [asphalt] asphaltene pellets and transporting the grinded [asphalt] asphaltene pellets to a location.